

Application No. 09/994,492
Amendment dated February 7, 2005
Reply to Final Office Action of November 19, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;

a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle, said head having a head thickness; and

spacer means connected to said head for extending a spacing between a pair of bones forming a joint and thereby tensioning a ligament joining said pair of bones, said blade recessed from said spacer means, said spacer means having a spacer means thickness, said spacer means thickness greater than said head thickness.

Claim 2 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 1, wherein said spacer means comprises a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers, said joint spacers having a thickness whereby said joint spacers are operable to extend a joint space between a femoral head and an acetabulum to thereby tension a ligamentum teres femoris.

Claim 3 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 2, wherein said thickness is about 31 millimeters.

Claim 4 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;

a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle; and

spacer means connected to said head for extending a spacing between a pair of bones forming a joint and thereby tensioning a ligament joining said pair of bones, said blade recessed from said spacer means, wherein said head has a radius of curvature whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint.

Claim 5 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 4, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending substantially radially from said head.

Claim 6 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 4, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending from said head in a direction about 30° away from said radius of curvature toward a concave surface of said head.

Claim 7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;

a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle, said head having a head thickness; and

a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers, said joint spacers having a thickness whereby said joint spacers are operable to extend a joint space between a femoral head and an acetabulum to thereby tension a ligamentum teres femoris, said joint spacers having a joint spacer thickness, said joint spacer thickness greater than said head thickness.

Claim 9 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 8, wherein said thickness is about 31 millimeters.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;
a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle; and
a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers, said joint spacers having a thickness whereby said joint spacers are operable to extend a joint space between a femoral head and an acetabulum to thereby tension a ligamentum teres ~~femoris~~ wherein femoris wherein said head has a radius of curvature, whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint.

Claim 11 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 10, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending substantially radially from said head.

Claim 12 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 10, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending from said head in a direction about 30° away from said radius of curvature toward a concave surface of said head.

Claim 13 (original): The ligament cutter of Claim 8, wherein said blade is recessed from said joint spacers.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a cylindrical handle having grip means for facilitating a firm grip of the ligament cutter;

an extension connected to said handle, said extension tapering away from said handle; and

a head connected to said extension, said head having a head thickness, said head having a distal end with a pair of joint spacers connected thereto, said blade spanning said joint spacers, said joint spacers having a joint spacer thickness which is greater than a thickness of said blade said joint spacer thickness greater than said head thickness, wherein said head has a

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radius of curvature whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint;

wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending substantially radially from said head;

wherein said blade is recessed from said joint spacers.

Claim 15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;

a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle; and

a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers, wherein said blade is recessed from said joint spacers, said head having a radius of curvature whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 16, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending substantially radially from said head.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 16, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending from said head in a direction about 30° away from said radius of curvature toward a concave surface of said head.

Claims 19 and 20 (canceled)

Claim 21 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;

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a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle; and
a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers, said head having a radius of curvature whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 21, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending substantially radially from said head.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 21, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending from said head in a direction about 30° away from said radius of curvature toward a concave surface of said head.

Claim 24 (canceled)

Claim 25 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;
a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle; and
a joint spacer connected to said head and extending distally from said distal end of said head, said head having a radius of curvature whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 25, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending substantially radially from said head.

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Claim 27 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 25, wherein said handle is connected to said head via an extension, said extension extending from said head in a direction about 30° away from said radius of curvature toward a concave surface of said head.

Claims 28 and 29 (canceled)

Claim 30 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:

a handle;

a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle, said head having a curvature in a plane perpendicular to said blade, said curvature substantially matching the curvature of a femoral head.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 30, further comprising:

spacer means connected to said head for extending a spacing between a pair of bones forming a joint and thereby tensioning a ligament joining said pair of bones, said blade recessed from said spacer means.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 31, wherein said spacer means comprises a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers, said joint spacers having a thickness whereby said joint spacers are operable to extend a joint space between a femoral head and an acetabulum to thereby tension a ligamentum teres femoris.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 30, wherein said blade is recessed from said spacer means.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 30, further comprising:

a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers.

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Claim 35 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 34, wherein said blade is recessed from said joint spacers.

Claims 36-42 (canceled)

Claim 43 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 1, wherein said spacer means are offset from said head.

Claim 44 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:
a handle;
a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle; and
spacer means connected to said head for extending a spacing between a pair of bones forming a joint and thereby tensioning a ligament joining said pair of bones, said blade recessed from said spacer means, said spacer means offset from said head.

Claim 45 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 44, wherein said head has a radius of curvature whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint.

Claim 46 (previously presented): A ligament cutter, comprising:
a handle;
a head having a distal end with a blade, said head connected to said handle; and
a pair of joint spacers, said blade spanning said joint spacers, said joint spacers having a thickness whereby said joint spacers are operable to extend a joint space between a femoral head and an acetabulum to thereby tension a ligamentum teres femoris, wherein said joint spacers are offset from said head.

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Claim 47 (previously presented): The ligament cutter of Claim 46, wherein said head has a radius of curvature whereby said head can be positioned intermediate a ball and a socket of a ball-and-socket joint.